

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ANKARA 08577 111151Z

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TO AMEMBASSY CAIRO

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 8577

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SNAR, TU, EG

SUBJECT: EGYPTIAN SEIZURE OF ALLEGED TURKISH OPIUM

REF: (A) CAIRO 15253, (B) CAIRO 15257, (C) CAIRO 15288,
(D) ANKARA 8375

1. ON NOVEMBER 9, EMBOFF MET AGAIN WITH MURAT BILHAN, MFA OFFICER IN CHARGE OF INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION ON NARCOTICS MATTERS, TO DISCUSS EGYPTIAN SEIZURE OF OPIUM INVOLVING TURKISH SHIP (REFTELS). BILHAN DEPLORED EGYPTIAN ATTITUDE, CALLING IT "INCOMPREHENSIBLE" AND "ALMOST HOSTILE". BILHAN, REFERRING TO WHAT HE SAID WERE 28 TELEGRAMS FROM TURKISH EMBASSY, CAIRO, ON THE CASE, SAID THAT TURKISH CHARGE HAD BEEN ASKING EGYPTIAN AUTHORITIES SINCE JUNE 26 FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE ARREST AND FOR PERMISSION TO INTERVIEW DELIBALTA, BUT UNTIL RECENT GRANT OF PERMISSION FOR CONSULAR ACCESS TO DELIBALTA, EGYPTIANS HAD GENERALLY FAILED EVEN TO ACKNOWLEDGE TURKISH REQUESTS.

2. ACCORDING TO BILHAN, TURKISH CHARGE HAD MADE FOUR REQUESTS TO SEE HEAD OF EGYPTIAN ANTI-NARCOTICS ADMINISTRATION (ANA), NONE OF WHICH HAD RECEIVED AN ANSWER. BILHAN SAID THOSE REQUESTS, AS WELL AS REQUESTS FOR ACCESS TO DELIBALTA, HAD BEEN MADE "TO THE APPROPRIATE LEVEL" IN THE EGYPTIAN MFA, WHICH HE ASSUMED WOULD HAVE BEEN WITH THE "DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE APPROPRIATE SECTION", AND THAT THE SUBJECT HAD

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PAGE 02 ANKARA 08577 111151Z

BEEN BROUGHT UP IN ANKARA WITH THE EGYPTIAN COUNSELLOR.

(THIS WOULD SEEM TO CONFIRM EMBASSY CAIRO'S VIEW THAT TURKS HAVE NOT ATTEMPTED TO RAISE THE ISSUE WITH THE EGYPTIANS AT HIGH LEVEL.)

3. TELEGRAM ON RESULTS OF VISIT OF TURKISH EMBOFF TO DELIBALTA WAS EXPECTED IN MFA MOMENTARILY. BILHAN SAID THAT INTERVIEW WAS NOT TO BE DETAILED INTERROGATION BUT MAINLY WOULD ESTABLISH DELIBALTA'S EXACT IDENTIFY--ADDRESS IN TURKEY, FATHER'S NAME, ETC.--SO THAT TURKISH POLICE COULD CKECK INTO HIS BACKGROUND.

4. BILHAN FOUND ATTITUDE OF ANA DEP DIR ZAKI PARTICULARLY PUZZLING. DURING THE DRUG ENFORCEMENT INTERNATIONAL ALUMNI ASSOCIATION MEETING IN ROME IN OCTOBER, ZAKI MET COL. ALPASLAN, CHIEF OF TURKISH GENDARMERIE NARCOTICS SECTION AND, ACCORDING TO BILHAN, PRAISED TURKISH OPIUM CONTROLS, SAYING THAT AS RESULT OF TURKISH SUCCESS, STREET PRICE OF OPIUM PRODUCTS IN EGYPT HAD INCREASED TREMENDOUSLY. THIS SAME ZAKI, HOWEVER, HAD BEEN COMPLETELY UNSYMPATHETIC TO TURKISH REQUESTS IN CAIRO. (DELIBALTA CASE APPARENTLY NOT DISCUSSED BETWEEN ZAKI AND ALPASLAN).

5. EMBOFF RELAYED ANA DIRGEN FARAG'S EXPRESSED WILLINGNESS TO GIVE ALL POSSIBLE HELP TO THE TURKS IF ASKED BY THEM. BILHAN WAS NOT FAMILIAR WITH FARAG'S NAME, SEEMED SURPRISED TO HEAR HE WAS HEAD OF ANA, AND COULD NOT RECALL IF TURKS HAD MADE ANY APPROACHES TO HIM, BUT STATED THAT HE WOULD INSTRUCT TURKISH EMBASSY, CAIRO, TO CONTACT FARAG.
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